

Weekly Column for January 12, 2006

Last Saturday we had a tragic fire in the North Central area of the City that claimed the life of 8-month old Rebecca Rosario. Despite the strongest efforts from our firefighters, they could not reach Rebecca in time to save her young life. Please keep this young girl, and all those who loved her, in your thoughts and prayers.

Ironically the fire took place on a Saturday afternoon, a time when you do not typically see many City workers performing their jobs. In that morning's papers, there was a story about the amount of overtime the City spent during 2005. At the top of the list of overtime earners were two firefighters.

I said in jest to a reporter from *The Record* that one way to rid the City of overtime would be to hope for no snow, crime, or fires. Of course that is unrealistic, but we saw how clearly things can change last week. One minute there was a beautiful Saturday afternoon in front of you, the next there was tragedy.

And throughout that day firefighters battled as best they could, eventually saving several other structures in the neighborhood. Police sought answers to what had happened, what had caused the awful tragedy. And Public Works and Public Utilities employees froze while ensuring that roads were blocked, and other personnel were allowed to do their jobs.

Often times tragedy takes place during quiet hours, either at night, or during the middle of a work week. And it is during those times that we can sometimes take our public employees for advantage. We forget how difficult their jobs can be, and how tough it is to do on a day-to-day basis.

Then we can be brought back to reality in an instant.

The men and women on duty at the fire scene last week did a remarkable job with whatever task they had. And we sincerely appreciate their efforts as they begin yet another year of difficult work that is sometimes overlooked.

Enjoy your weekend.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy